

Sid. BAINBRIDGE.

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 3448177 8

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

1922

1

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

EX LIBRIS UNIVERSITATIS ALBERTAENSIS



"B. D." THESIS

THE HISTORICAL AND PERMANENT ELEMENTS

in

R E L I G I O N

thesis
1922
#1

THE HISTORICAL and PERMANENT
ELEMENTS IN RELIGION

As an introduction to our study it might be well for us first of all to define what we mean by religion. We are very often told by writers who have sought to give a definition of religion that its manifold and widely different historic forms present a very serious difficulty, e.g., the primitive nature religions and Buddhism are separated by such a wide gulf that it is not very easy to bridge this in a sentence or two. Galloway points out that ⁽¹⁾ "a definition of religion should bring out the genetic principles or motives which underlie the development of the religious consciousness." With this in mind, he offers the following as a tentative definition of religion. ^(1a)

"Man's faith in a power beyond himself, whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life, and which he expresses in acts of worship and service."

⁽²⁾ Professor Hopkins of Yale says "Religion is squaring human life with superhuman life". He ⁽³⁾ therefore goes on to say that the "history of



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/historicalperman00univ>

religion is simply the story of how different communities have succeeded in adjusting their lives to what they have believed to be a living power, not identical with their own power, but superhuman, even if they themselves may expect eventually, when they too have become more than human to obtain a similar power or become identified with it."

In each of these definitions the permanent elements are seen to have been a recognition of the unseen, the superhuman, and the attempt or effort to establish friendly relations with such spiritual powers. The historical elements are simply the different ways in which people of all ages from the primitive savage to the most enlightened of our modern scholars have sought to express this recognition and effort. As we trace out the evolution of religion it will be seen that the historical elements have changed with the changing cultural ideas and growth of intelligence, but the recognition of the superhuman and the attempt to win the help and favor of the unseen are the elements that remain unchanged in every age of human history.

To quote Professor Benjamin Moore of the University of Liverpool, England (4) "But the eternal truths of science and religion were the same one hundred years

ago as they are today and as they will be a hundred years hence, both realms of knowledge as well as our inborn desires to penetrate their mysteries are a part of the great plan of creation, and in their intrinsic laws remain the same "yesterday, today and for-ever". It is our knowledge and powers of conception that have changed and not the eternal verities."

As illustrations of the permanent and historical elements referred to above we will examine the various phases of religion as revealed in the world's history. The first stage of religion of which we have any trace is largely Animistic, in which a vague awe of the supernatural prevailed, an awe in which fear, wonder and reverence were mingled. Animism is a belief in a spirit or life existing in everything even including natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, etc. Some of these were kind and helpful but others were most harmful and had to be carefully guarded against. As the primitive savage believed he was continually surrounded by such powers he felt it very essential that he should establish friendly relations with them.

In the early stages of Animism the life or spirit was bound always to its object, but gradually

there developed the idea of the soul or spirit being liberated at times from its object and moving about freely at will. Eventually the good and powerful of these spirits developed into gods as is seen among the early inhabitants of North and South America and other lands. Most real to the native of South America is Nature Worship, because his fears or hopes are based on a belief that natural phenomena have the power, and will do him harm or good as they feel so disposed.

Also there arose after the separation of the spirit from its object, the phenomena of shadows accompanying man and then mysteriously disappearing, and along with the phenomena of dreams this led to a belief in the spirit of one's dead ancestor returning to visit on the earth, which later gave man his belief in immortality.

Here in the most primitive peoples we have this recognition of spiritual or unseen powers accompanied by an effort to win their favor. Even the religious apparatus for worship is seen in the circles of memorial stones of the Druids as found in different parts of England, these representing our modern church buildings of today.

Following this we have Fetishism, Mana and

Taboo, all very directly connected with Animism. There was always a utilitarian value attached to the fetish and the savage used it to control the spirits for his own purposes, revering or ill-treating it accordingly as it worked or failed to work towards his ends. The primitive savage treated his spirits exactly as he did his human neighbors. When ^{he} wanted a thing, he got it either by coercion or propitiation, whichever seemed better, using precisely the same methods as in dealing with his human neighbors.

(5)

Hist. of Rel.
p.18

"But", says Hopkins "the object to which his vague mumblings of hope and fear are directed is neither god nor devil nor a power of any sort as a person; it is rather a potency called mana or orenda." But we must not think of the savage as regarding the mana or orenda as one universal power of which he and his rival and his object of devotion each have a part. His mana is his own as is that of the chief or animal theirs, just as each has his own strength. Mana was an inherent potency which the savage believed existed often in things not living or moving, e.g., that which gave a person poison from the stagnant waters of the jungle, also which gave spring to the tiger and venom to the snake, and which walks abroad in the terrible form of cholera, smallpox, and other deadly diseases.

Everything mysterious, dangerous and not understood was treated as taboo, whether religious or not. And many of our social customs today, such as the wearing of black clothes at funerals, etc. may be traced to a belief in taboo. The distinct element in taboo was that it marked the awe of the man in the presence of what he conceived to be the supernatural.

From this very crude and irrational belief we can see faint beginnings of morality and civilized society. The morality was chiefly negative, but it would seem that the moral sense, the knowledge of right and wrong emerges historically out of the prohibitions "thou shalt not" i.e. the feeling that certain things were taboo because in the first place they were dangerous and therefore wrong.

We have the same idea in the earlier Genesis story of creation; the great fact in this beautiful picture being the dawning of the moral sense in the tree being regarded as taboo. We see therefore that these germs, planted in the soul of paganism, grew into lofty moral idealism, and found their ripest fruitage in Judaism and Christianity.

While in their expression many things which because of ignorance and hardness of heart were ir-

rational, unnatural, even inhuman, and which seemed to impede human progress, yet the inner urge behind the thing itself was divine, and without it the growth of such conceptions as immortality would not have been possible. The strange power or potency residing in the object is very much akin to that constant factor which has persisted all down through the ages regarding the mysterious spiritual energy behind material forms and which even modern science does not deny, but rather supports, and which even the highest form of religion asserts.

ist.of Rel.
p.38

(6) "The highest religions become fetishistic when a power is supposed to inhere in a material object though will power is no longer imagined in it", says Hopkins. "Thus a piece of the cross or Koran invested with miraculous power for good is practically a fetish." The great difference between the idol and the fetish is that the idol usually serves the group whereas the fetish works alone for its owner. Fetishism is rather the expression of a mental attitude than a religion, but there is nevertheless the recognition of the unseen power. Taboo is the religious expression of fear and fetishism of hope. The word fetish as originally applied to the talismans of Portuguese

sailors signified a charm to bring luck. Instead of merely possessing a spirit the fetish is a spiritual power and itself possesses the mysterious power or potency.

Totemism marks a stage in advance of taboo because the totem was not merely an individual affair but revered by the tribe or clan, and treated as a member of the clan. But the chief element in Totemism again as in all forms even of primitive religions is the recognition or consciousness of possessing a supernatural ally who is friendly and if approached in the proper manner will give aid. The historical elements are seen in the crude forms and practices which in our modern religions are replaced by love of and service for humanity with a universal God as Our Father.

In order to establish more amicable relations with the deity animal sacrifices were instituted. The idea of such sacrifice in the first place was to please and pacify the god, the worshipper enjoying communion with the deity in a fellowship meal, when some parts of the animal were roasted and eaten by the worshipper after other portions had been offered as a sacrifice to the god. Through union with the god the worshipper gained deliverance from threatened evil and also

possession of coveted good. Later came the idea of the god participating in the sacred meal as well as being worshipped at it.

Then, as a further development the animal came to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the clan, the animal being a scapegoat or a substitute for the human being who ought to have been slain. From such crude practices came the Christian idea of the atonement in Jesus Christ, and thus again and again we have this idea illustrated of the higher religions resting upon a very savage and lowly, though none the less solid foundation. Once more it is the recognition that remains permanent whereas the expression of such a belief is the historical element and this changes according to the stage of civilization a people has reached. Religion, as someone has said, is like a tree whose roots lie deep in the darkness of primitivity.

ist. of
p.48

(7)

"The savage is usually a practical man, and his religion usually consists" says Hopkins, "in making the best of his unavoidable neighbors." Because of this, mythology which requires imagination is not at all well developed among the savages. The Ainus, who were hairy savages in Japan in the middle of the nine-

teenth century according to Rev.Mr.Batchelor, one of the early missionaries, had neither gods,priests nor temples, but they saw the hand of God in everything.

Hopkins points out that Totemism in America is of secondary character and offers no solution of the problem of its origin. Also he regards The Great Spirit of the American Indian, as well as that of the African natives, as a product of the Christian missionary rather than a native idea. There was, however, with the Indians a semblance of the priesthood, ranging from the medicine-man to the chief pontiff and the most universal elements in the cult were the prayer, smoke, sacrifice, fast, bath and dance. The soul of most Indians is "shadow" or "breath" but vital forces were often multiplied. In all these very primitive ideas as also in the practice of scalping carried on by the Indians, where the soul-strength was believed to be carried away in the hair, we see this permanent element of religion in the recognition of some mysterious spiritual supernatural power. We must admit that even the rudest religious systems have represented in them, no doubt in a shadowy and distorted way, all the elements that enter into the

very highest forms of our modern religions worship.

Other examples of this primitive form of recognition of the supernatural are seen in the Celtic religions. The Celts were great believers in magic. The priesthood was drawn from the youths of the nation who elected their own chief. (8) "If we seek as indicative of Celtic character the most widespread phenomena", says Hopkins, "they are the worship of a few great gods over a wide area, the employment of magic, the influence of the priesthood, and a general but localized belief in special terrestrial divinities, silvani, animals, rivers, springs, etc." The Druids resemble in many ways the Brahmins of India and have been regarded by some as pre-Aryan magicians. They were arbitrators, and judges like the early Roman priests.

With the Baltic group of people their worship in general was offered to heavenly phenomena, especially the sun, moon, star of the morning and dawn. The remains of genuine Slavic religion are scanty and not very satisfactory for the interpretation of primitive religious notions. There is no clear division between the Teuton and the Celt. The Germans have always been notorious for their super-

stition, egotism and tribal self-centredness, and these characteristics had a great influence on their belief and outward form of religion. They had gods of peace and gods of war and they believed in a here-after, as is seen by their custom of bringing horses and men along with a dead chief. As well as a Fire-Cult, their chief gods were Mercury or Woden, the Wind or Storm God; Hercules or Thor, the Home-loving or Domestic God; and Mars, Ziu or Zeus. The older Germans deified man in ancestor-worship rather than humanized God. The Teutonic religions, we may say, combine crude belief and crude cult, but again we find the recognition of the unseen even though expressed in such crude forms.

This is also seen in the earlier religions of India where the aborigines had forms of animism, totemism and also of nature worship. They were agriculturists and each village had its own Great Mother Spirit. The invading Aryans brought in an 'aristocratic cult' in the Vedic religion. It has a complicated ritual though is a very crude form of religion. It endeavored to consolidate the gods rather than to exalt any one of them. The common people largely remained Vedics, undisturbed by mystics. The Jains founded a religion of salvation through

faith in the founder Jina, or conqueror. This sect has existed for 2400 years, especially in South and West India and has established many monasteries and nunneries.

Again in China prior to Confucius the religions were chiefly forms of Ancestor Worship, Animism and a great Exclusiveness; and until Buddhism entered there was neither priesthood nor mythology. The earliest Japanese religion was a pure Naturism, with practically no ancestor worship nor any form of priesthood. A religion of loyalty rather than filial piety was advocated.

In the great national religions such as Shintoism, Taoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Moham-
medanism and Christianity we have illustrations of the two distinct elements in question. Shintoism "the way of the gods" is the old native religion of Japan. In the main it is a worship of nature, and we find three successive stages of the ⁿception of divinity in nature, according to Dr. Aston, a writer in Hastings Encyclop. of Religion and Ethics. First the fetish idea of a natural object such as the sun is regarded as sentient and worshipped as god. Secondly the god is thought of as an anthropomorphic being and thirdly it is conceived not as the natural object itself

or its presiding deity, but as a spiritual emanation from him which resides in his temple on earth and otherwise exercises a spiritual influence there. Although as a religion it is practically extinct and has given way to Buddhism and Christianity the recognition of the divine as seen in this case in Nature, is an element common to all religions and one which we regard as permanent.

In the sixth century B.C. two great religions leaders arose, Lao and Confucius. Lao was a mystic and has been called the "Wizard of the West". Orderly goodness, Lao declared, is the natural state of the universal and a cultivation of Tao, the controller of the universe, is man's duty. One was to be emptied of worldliness in order to be filled with *a similar conception to that of Christianity.* the "Spirit", [^] There is certainly a definite recognition of some mysterious supernatural power, the belief being just the same but the expression varying with the type of people holding the belief. Confucius was a practical statesman and stood for morality rather than religion.

Mr. W. G. Walshe says of the religion of Confucius (9) "Heaven might commission men to perform certain tasks, and protect them whilst in the execu-

tion of them, but, for the carrying out of those commissions, man must depend upon his own unaided abilities, upon that "nature", predisposed towards goodness, which Heaven had conferred on him, and to which he himself must allow its full development, in harmony with the observed course of Nature and the examples of the great sages of the past. "Rest in the highest" or "Cease only when the acme is reached", is the keynote of the "Great Learning" of Confucius." His religion is held by the learned class but Taoism for many centuries was the accepted state religion of the Chinese.

Buddhism was founded by Guatama, a reputed prince of a ^h~~Sa~~rakya clan, living north of Benares in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. When about 29 years of age he became a practical pessimist, disgusted with the rotation of life and death. After much fruitless study of philosophy for seven years, one day while sitting under the Tree of Enlightenment he became by intuition The Enlightened or Awakened. There is little known of his sect until about the third century B.C. but it was founded on Grief, with four great basic truths.

- (1) Birth and death are a grief.

(2) Grief of existence is due to desire, as with e.g. thirst.

(3) Grief ends when desire ends.

(4) Desire is extinguished by the following eight rules - Right belief; resolve, act; word; life; meditation; effort and thought. Nirvana was the extinction of all desire.

There was no soul, no psychology no psyche but "each for himself" was the primitive Buddhist creed. But there was nevertheless this belief in some power outside of self and it is this recognition that is the abiding element in all religions.

(10) Zoroastrianism was rooted in the old Aryan folk religion, but the founder seems to have been a "man of highly speculative turn". Two spirits he believed to have existed at the beginning of things, representing good and evil, and both possessing creative power, but the ultimate triumph of the good spirit Ormazd is an ethical demand of the Zoroastrian religion. Zoroaster was the prophet sent to establish the way of salvation from sin. His temptation and that of Jesus are very close parallels, also like John the Baptist Zoroaster believed that the fulness of time was near and the kingdom of heaven was at hand. There is a distinct historical connection between the

Encyclop.
tg, 11th Ed.
128
1041-2

Zoroastrian and the Christian faiths but the belief in a supreme power is common to all religions.

(11)
cylop.Britt.
1th Ed.
ol.17
.417

(11) ^s "The Mahommedan religion is generally known as Islam - the name given to it by Mahomet himself - and meaning the resigning or submitting onself to God." Islam is the latest of the so-called world religions and the prophet no doubt was influenced in some of his doctrines and practices by the contemporary religions then practised in Arabia including heathenism, Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. God is one and universal from the beginning, his unity being emphasized in opposition to the mistaken conception of the Christian Trinity and later the name Allah which seems to have belonged to prevailing heathenism was taken over and identified with Mahomet's god, in the first part of the later Moslem creed which announces "there is no god but Allah". Mahomet maintained that God had revealed himself to man by writings and Prophets. Just as he had given the Law to the Jews, and the gospel to the Christians so he revealed to Mahomet the Koran. The prophets to the different peoples included according to the Koran Moses to the Jews, Jesus to the Christians and Mahomet "the seal of the prophets" to the Moslems.

Fear of the judgment of God's will was a motive of action, followed by repentance and turning to God. Military methods of propaganda were adopted, their opponents being reduced to taxpayers, and "submission" rather than mission was the watchword. The historical element is seen in its borrowing from contemporary religions, especially that of Christianity, but the recognition of God as a power greater than man is the abiding element which is common to all religions.

The religions of Israel are largely traditional before David. Many Old Testament stories are found in Babylonian traditions, such as that of the flood and others. The Priestly Code comes from an agricultural and not a nomadic people. The prophets, with Amos in the van as the first monotheist, emphasized a national, ethical, moral and individual religion. Jeremiah bridged the gap between the prophetic and legalism. Later we have a reaction against legalism as seen in the mysticism of Christianity.

With reference to Christianity the account is too near the event to justify doubt of its historicity but there are many influences of contemporary religions evident in the development of Christianity. The resurrection story resembles those of the mystery cults.

But the evolution of Christianity has seen a great tendency to depart from the religion of Jesus, and even Paul must be regarded as the founder of Christianity, rather than of the religion of Jesus. There has been so much tacked on by the Christian Church throughout its struggles during the last nineteen hundred years that today when we examine the religion of Jesus and compare it with the modern interpretations of orthodox Christianity it is quite difficult to reconcile the two at all. This has led many of our present day scholars to advocate a return to the original religion of Jesus and a shedding off of all the extras that have been added during the history of the Christian church.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews opens his letter with words that point out the permanent element in Christianity. ⁽¹²⁾ "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." The different ways of interpreting the life and teachings of Jesus have multiplied tremendously in the intervening nineteen hundred years, and represent the historical element, but the recognition of Jesus as the revealer of

brews 1,
1-2

the unseen is the permanent feature for in this respect He is the same yesterday today and forever.

This is a very brief sketch of the historical development of religions, but we can trace with careful observation a distinct process of evolution in the growth of religion from that of earliest primitivity to the present wonderful and almost extravagant display of our twentieth century religions. It is our purpose now to endeavour to point out what there is in all these religions that has not changed but which we may regard as permanent elements.

All religions are grounded in the spiritual nature of man and therefore to get at the ultimate in religion our study must be along psychological lines. To begin with, let us get a psychological basis for religion. There are three determining factors in the religion of the race and of the individual, (a) the principle of environment, which would include education and social influences. Some people hold that this is the chief if not the sole determining factor, but such cases as Saul of Tarsus, Jesus of Nazareth and the many instances of individual transformations reported by our large City Missions all tend to contradict this view. (b) The second factor is that of heredity, and this also has been declared to be the

sole determining factor, whereas in truth these two factors merely co-operate with another force lying behind and which is the explanation of the spiritual nature of man. (c) This is the power of a World Consciousness or Cosmic Consciousness, the independent spiritual life of the world, to put it in philosophic terms. Speaking theologically or religiously we might say God in relation to the Universe and Human life.

It is a well recognized fact of psychology that something does arise out of the deep and affects profoundly our ordinary conscious activity. We all must recognize this world ground which has its own way of imparting itself to us. It functions not only religiously but in a multitude of forms. The actual concrete "my" is thus conjunct in its innermost nature with the more than "my", and the Subconscious has become an every day affair in all our lives.

Therefore, in order to find the key to the interpretation of religion we must study the motive which prompted man to be religious, i.e. the feelings, impulses and ideas which conspired to bring about in man that state of mind which we call religious.

This provides us with a common ground on which there is a unity which links the modern man with the most ancient primitive savage. Intellectually, man has made great progress but behind the intellectual are the fundamental feelings and impulses which have persisted through all stages of development. These instinctive sentiments of the human soul, functioning religiously led man to seek helpful relationships with powers higher than himself. Of course they were colored very largely by the environment in which they found expression and which also acted as a stimulus in calling them forth, but the life and driving power behind them all was the divine urge, the Spiritual Life of the World, the power of a World Consciousness, or God in relation to the Universe and Human life.

We have seen the different expressions of this universal element in all types of humanity in our references to Animism, Fetishism and Totemism among the most primitive people and also in the more modern national religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, Mohammedism and Christianity. The inward urge and the reaching out for something or Someone greater than self was the same in all and may be regarded as common ground

but the mode of expression of this recognition
for all these different forms of religion or belief
differed according to the stage reached intellectually
by the worshippers.

PhillipsBrookes tells us regarding Helen
Keller, that most remarkable woman though blind and
deaf, that when she was told by her teacher about
God she replied, "Oh, I knew Him all the time but I
didn't know His name."

In our study of the psychical life we might
use the threefold division most commonly recognized,
that of feeling, thought and will, but in every psychic-
al process all of these three elements are involved
only with one or other of them usually predominating.
But it is the cognitive or intellectual element which
distinguishes even the most primitive savage from the
beast of the field, and which makes religion possible.

To sum up then, religion is the outcome of
our total personality in which feeling, thought, and
will are insensibly and inseparably blended, crossing
and re-crossing each other like subtle threads in a
complex web. In examining the history and develop-
ment of religion we have to admit that religion ante-
dates the recorded history as it was a factor in pre-
historic days.

Hume stresses fear as the motive responsible

for religion and goes to primitivity for his argument. Schliemacher^r claims that religion arises out of the feeling of absolute dependence. But such views rest upon a defective psychology and ignore the fundamental law of the unity of the human mind, supposing that one element may function apart from the whole. These feelings of fear and dependence are present in the origin and growth of religious sentiment, but they never operate alone. Religion is a life and wherever you find life you find growth, and continuity and change are essential to this growth or evolution. There has been a process of evolution going on continually in the history of religion, even though this has been occasionally stimulated by revolution.

There has been a continual change in the evolution of religion but nothing absolutely new was ever introduced into it. What we call new was originally germinated in the old and comes out according to the law of growth through the principle of continuity and change. Socrates always declared that "in embryo the truth is there" even in the most ignorant slave.

There have been three main tendencies in

religion which, broadly speaking, correspond to the three main functions of personality: the mystical - having to do with the feelings, the practical - related to the will, and the speculative - having reference to thought. The Mystical tendency grows out of the emotional depths of the human spirit, which depths may be semi-conscious or sub-conscious, but there is no outstanding man in history in whom the mystical element has not been a great factor. We cannot altogether eliminate the mystical element from religion. The Practical tendencies grow out of the Will to believe, to do, to protect one's self, to grow and make the best of one's self. The Speculative tendencies arise from man's rationality and include a desire to know, to look before and after. The mystical and practical tendencies appear first and manifest themselves in a religious cult. The speculative tendencies follow in due time to interpret this cult and to fit it into a rational view of the world. The Speculative in its earliest stages finds expression in Mythology. Myths are inevitably universal, and in the absence of science they are the most natural things in this world. Man is so constituted that he must have some philosophy of life, some explanation of the world. In a word

Mythology is primitive man's science of philosophy. Our primitive ancestors knew nothing about laws of nature and therefore had an unlimited capacity for fancy and belief. The only force they knew of was that of which they were directly conscious, i.e. the force of will. They accordingly imagined all the outer world to be endowed with volition and personified everything. Even the cultured Greeks addressed the Sky as a person, praying to it for rain, and Anaxagoras almost lost his life just because he spoke of the moon as a lifeless piece of matter. Curiosity and credulity are characteristics of the savage mind. But Mythology is not necessarily religion although religion may manifest itself through mythology. This we saw in our reference to the different creation stories of the Indo-European peoples. They differ according to the difference between the religious beliefs of the different peoples. The Hebrew accounts reveal a much more dignified conception of God and man, and a poverty in mythological material, but a wealth in religious poetry.

Magic stands in very close relation to ancient religion, yet it does not form a normal nor an essential part of it. It may be defined as the

special and abnormal agency whereby superhuman powers are constrained either to create evil or to avert ~~ba~~eful effects.

There are three distinct stages in the evolution of religion, viz., tribal, national and universal. Primitive or tribal religion might be called natural religion. In the growth of nationhood three economic and political forces were in operation which all to some extent influenced religion. With the change from a hunting, fishing, nomadic people to an agricultural race there were different material needs arose and these demanded a new god. Also there came a desire for self-protection which in its turn necessitated a War God. Finally the dominance of a powerful tribe over surrounding tribes led to the god of the conquering tribe becoming a Supreme Deity.

With increased culture and wealth came a desire for higher and more cultured forms of the deity as the crude deities of the savage were no longer appreciated. We see illustrations of these changes in the character of the gods in the Hebrew conquest of Canaan and the Norman conquest of England. Civilization is a good thing if the foundations of religion can be saved i.e. brotherhood, goodwill etc. otherwise

it is a curse.

Just as primitive religion develops into national religion with the coming of new social and political needs, as a result of the transition from a tribal to a more civilized stage of society, so national religion develops into universal religion, when the new social and political needs arise as a result of widening of international relationships and further refinement and culture and a deepening and enriching of personality. When through increased facilities of travel and trade the whole world lives a life in which each nation is depending upon intercourse with and the goodwill of every other nation, a universal deity is necessary to meet the needs of such a race. These might be called the economic and political forces at work.

These different stages in the evolution of religion are but further illustrations of the way in which the permanent element - which is the recognition or belief in a power greater than man and an effort to establish friendly relations with the same, has changed in its form of expression during the various stages of the economic and political development in the world's history.

Again, if we study the progress of religious

reforms we find they have been largely the work of individual men of clear vision and strong personality who are the lonely solitary souls who, while they live in close touch with their times are sufficiently detached and isolated to live above the confusion of their day. These men in all ages have been seers and have surveyed the past and the future, ever seeking to establish relations with the Infinite suited to the times in which they lived. The Hebrews were particularly rich in such men of insight and religious genius, but other peoples have not been without them. Isaiah had Zoroaster as his contemporary in Persia, while in the Orient and at Rome there were leaders doing the same thing, as seen in such men as Buddha, Confucius and Epictetus. Such men of the watch-tower type saw beyond their own little boundaries and country, and got the vision of a world-need. Then as they looked deeply into human life they identified the needs of human life with those of the world because they saw the world was akin, all the offspring of God being made of one common moral and spiritual constitution. They, therefore, set forth a recognition of one common Maker and Father of all mankind. It is through the exalting of the individual, therefore,

that universality of religion has received its impetus and dynamic. As Tennyson writes in his Locksley Hall "the individual withers and the world is more and more"; the emphasis on the individual being that which supplies the dynamic for world vision and movements.

It was this insight and profound knowledge which made Jesus the Guide for all time in such matters. Jesus discovered the individual and thus supplied the dynamic for all the political and social reforms of the centuries intervening since His day. At the same time He who thus exalted the individual proclaimed a universal brotherhood and also a world religion. History has proved the necessity of religion establishing a cult in order to preserve its life. While religion must be individual, a purely individual religion is valueless. The Christian Church sprang up spontaneously after Christ's going away. It was the most natural thing in the world that those who had common sympathies, common interests and a common goal should meet together for counsel, fellowship, and the worship of a common God and Father.

Before finally summarizing the permanent elements in or the essence of religion we might

state that no matter what field we take, whether it be the study of Matter, of Life, or of Mind, we can only go **So** far before we enter the realm of the metaphysical. The geologist takes us back a long, long way, and to the ^{un}initiated makes most wonderful statements with reference to the evolution of this earth of ours, but although going back millions of years he begins with a period which he classifies "The Unrecoverable Beginnings of Earth History".

Historical
ology
405

As Professor Schuchert of Yale puts it ⁽¹²⁾ "Finite, circumscribed, and weak though man is he yet attempts to fathom the meaning of himself and likewise of all that is about him. He sees the moon, the sun, the myriads of stars in all the glistening splendor of their orderly array, and like the babe that reaches out and longs for the object appearing before his vision, so man through his mental eye, aided by the instrument of his own invention, wanders out into the vastness of space, ever observing, ever asking: What is the meaning of all this? Whence has it come? Though he stand face to face with the immutable laws of nature and with eternity itself, his questioning mind still seeks to overstep the boundaries of its finite-ness and strives to comprehend the infinite."

Again in regard to the origin of life we all think we know what it is or at least we all see its various manifestations. But its nature and origin are most baffling. On the basis of established facts in biology it can be said that we know nothing of a positive nature as to the origin of life. It is the greatest of the unsolved problems concerning man.

(14)
p.412 Schuchert quotes from Schäfer giving his opinion in 1912 as follows: ⁽¹⁴⁾ "Looking at the evolution of living matter by the light which is shed upon it from the study of the evolution of matter in general we are led to regard it as having been produced not by a sudden alteration, whether exerted by natural or supernatural agency, but by a gradual process of change from material which was lifeless, through material on the borderland between inanimate and animate to material which has all the characteristics to which we attach the term 'life' ".

Again when we consider the study of the Mind we find the psychologist goes only as far in an examination of mental states as the physicist does in the material realm. He never reaches the ultimate reality but merely gives a scientific description of the coming to pass of thought, always accepting uncritically some

hypothesis. He describes the process of thought rather than the real nature of thought. Emmanuel Kant pointed out that there were two elements or factors in knowledge, that furnished by sensation and also that derived from the intellect; the senses furnishing the materials of knowledge, and reason the cement needed to unite them into concepts. Knowledge, therefore, according to Kant, is a product of rationality and sensibility or vice versa. But the essence of the world itself is the result of the combined intellectual functions of our faculties and a something we know not what which arouses them. Reason therefore knows only the phenomena and not the thing in itself which may be really the cause of perception and reality. Reason, according to Kant, we may regard as regulative rather than creative. Will and not Reason becomes the basis, and this is the source and guardian of our religious faith.

In the final stages of a fully developed mind we have clearly differentiated subject and object, but back of the question as to how the mind comes to know is the question as to how the mind develops so as to be capable of knowing objects. Knowledge is something which springs out of life, the

will to know growing out of the will to live. This is in harmony with Bergson's Vitalism.

These observations give us a point of contact between the study of the scientific and the religious. In both cases the Real Object is beyond sense perception and can never be perceived alone by the senses. Hegel says we get in the appearance a manifestation of reality. Is this not also true of God and the soul? They are known by their manifestation. "Who by searching can find out God?" Yet we have the appearances of God in the progress of history, the moral order, and in the mind and heart of humanity as well as in the world of nature. To the extent to which these are known, i.e. the world, history, man, Jesus Christ, and the written record, to that extent is God known.

Finally, to sum up in conclusion, we will endeavour to point out what there is in religion that may be regarded as permanent or in other words the essence of all true religion. We gain our knowledge of this essence from history and religious consciousness. Religion must be reviewed in a twofold aspect, inner and outer. Both aspects are really one; they are unified in their depths and both grow up out of a

common soil and both are nourished from the same infinite and eternal sources. The inner experience has been called a state, an attitude of mind heart and will. The outer is the suitable expression of this inward grace and spiritual disposition. A frequent definition of religion is the life of God in the soul of man. The inward has been called the root and the outward the fruit.

(15) Life's
Basis & Life's
Ideals,
p.82

(15) "Such an inner spiritual experience has evolved through the whole of history", says Eucken, "and transcends all forms of life organization: it is impossible to explain it away."

(16)

"If mankind had possessed no spiritual energy, we should still be following the ways of Ab the Caveman". So says Shailer Matthews in his

(16) p.41

"Spiritual Interpretation of History." This writer goes on to point out that there is a "plus element" in humanity which has caused man to rise away above the beasts of the field. (17)

"Nature and animals are today essentially as they were ten thousand years ago", says Matthews, but "man has changed". It is human personality that has been the great creative factor in these changes, the writer points out; it has not by any means remained passive. When we compare primitive society with our modern universities

(17) p.42

and the great mass of culture which we take as a matter of course we have to admit that surely man has made wonderful progress within, or in the realm of the spirit.

(18)
Present Day
Ethics p.46

(18)

"Nothing therefore remains", says Eucken, "but to acknowledge in this inward tendency a movement of the universe - a movement in which man is privileged to participate, but which he could never engender from out of his own nature." Confirming what we have already quoted from Matthews, Eucken goes on to say:

(19)
p.49

(19)

"For it is the working within us of some spiritual force that exalts us above the animal world to the status of human beings."

(20)
(H)
p.60

(20)

"The movement towards spirituality" again quoting from Eucken "is ~~not~~ a mere negation, but leads to an affirmation founded on the basis of negation. Once man has found the right plane of life and has acquired a new individuality the gulf between him and the universe is bridged over. Man can then come into inner relation with reality, and can take possession of the infinite. This is the meaning of Goethe's lines:

“Till thou hearest the behest -
“To die for a re-birth!”
Thou art but a dreary guest
Upon the gloomy earth.” ”

The element which we have seen in all forms of religion from the animistic conceptions of primitivity to the lofty ideals of Christianity and which we regard as permanent is the belief in a mysterious spiritual force transcending the material world in which we live but nevertheless a power which should be sought as an ally in the great struggles of life. The historical is seen in the expression of this belief and the great progress made from that of the primitive savage who propitiated or coerced his god in the hour of need to that of the worshipper of today who leaves the comforts and often the luxury of good home to carry out the will of his Heavenly Father in the heart of Africa. The belief in the supernatural remains the same, but the expression has changed with the evolution of civilization.

To have value a religious conception must proceed from an emotion and give an impulse to the will. A direction of the will is essential to piety otherwise the emotion will die. The feeling element was strong in primitive religion. This is

essential to all true religion but feeling never functions alone in religion and should not be allowed to assume a dominant place. All the psychical elements are involved in the essence of religion and religion cannot maintain its character in the absence of any one of them. The entire personality moves forward in its totality towards the religious goal, and the rationalizing and moralizing of feeling is the whole movement of a fully developed religion.

There are many paths to God-consciousness, varying according to the peculiar temperament of different personalities. God-consciousness comes to one person more readily through one faculty than another and vice versa. Every man should start out in the quest for God on the path that lies nearest to him, but he should, in order to save himself from abnormal religion, strive to strengthen the weak places so that in time he may develop a full-orbed religious life.

The following quotation from Whetham's
"Science and the Human Mind" (21) we think will serve as a fitting conclusion to our discussion of the historical and the permanent elements in religion.

"It is probable that when the significance of the new knowledge of Comparative Religion is grasped by the world at large, men undeterred and unwarned by experience will feel their faith in danger and the foundations of the deep unloosed upon them. When they find how many cherished doctrines and how much beloved ritual arose from magic and nature worship and were common possessions of many faiths, when they see that on those rites and doctrines Christianity was merely grafted to supply a new interpretation of the mysteries, they will feel religion itself is crumbling before their eyes. Yet in truth it is but the old story of the sun's place in nature, and the old story of evolution. When Natural Selection gave a comprehensible theory of the method of creation some men rushed to the conclusion that life and all existence were but the by-play of materialistic mechanism. Slowly they came to see that things stood much as they were save that a fresh revelation of how had been given to mankind.

So in this new field of knowledge, a revelation of the method and process of the development of the religious experience of mankind does not alter the fact of its existence nor make shallow the depths

of the soul's sea of awe and reverence for its own
life and its intuitive apprehension of the divine.
The kingdom of heaven is still within."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Galloway "Philosophy of Religion"
- Hopkins "History of Religions"
- Prof. Moore "Origin and Nature of Life
(Univ. of Liverpool) (Home Univ. Lib)
- Hastings
- "Encyclop. of Religion and Ethics" Vols. IV & XI
Shinto and Confucius
- Encyclopedia Britannica 11th Ed. Vol. 28 - Zoroastrianism
Vol. 17 Mahomedanism
- Holy Bible Hebrew I - Christianity
- Schuchert Historical Geology
- Eucken Life's Basis and Life's Ideals
" Present Day Ethics
- Shailer Matthews, Spiritual Interpretation of History
- Whetham Science and the Human Mind
- Principal Tuttle - Lecture Notes on Philosophy of Religion.

B29737